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MEMORANDUM

NSLP 2007-24
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To: All NSLP Sponsors

From: Pat Cook and Katherine Stewart, RD, CPFM
Office of Child Nutrition and School Health
Nutrition Education Program Consultants

Subject: FDA Warning: Bolthouse Farms Carrot Juice – Botulism Concerns

In response to a fourth case of botulism being linked to Bolthouse Farms, Bakersfield, California brand carrot juice, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning consumers not to drink Bolthouse Farms Carrot Juice, 450 ml and 1 liter plastic bottles, with "BEST IF USED BY" dates of NOV 11 2006 or earlier. Consumers should discard this product. FDA is also reiterating its advice to consumers to keep carrot juice – including pasteurized carrot juice – refrigerated.

The fourth case of botulism poisoning involves an adult female in Florida who is currently suffering from paralysis. To date, one link between the illness and the consumers appears to be that the juice they drank was not properly refrigerated once it was in the home, which allowed the *Clostridium botulinum* spores to grow and produce toxin. FDA is investigating other possible links.

Clostridium botulinum is a bacterium commonly found in soil. Under certain conditions these bacteria can produce a toxin that if ingested can result in botulism, a disease that may cause paralysis or death. Cases of botulism from processed food are extremely rare in the U.S.

Symptoms of botulism can include: double-vision, droopy eyelids, altered voice, trouble with speaking or swallowing, and paralysis on both sides of the body that progresses from the neck down, possibly followed by difficulty in breathing. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

Adequate refrigeration is one of the keys to food safety and is essential to preventing pathogen growth. Refrigerator temperatures should be no higher than 40°F and freezer temperatures no higher than 0°F. Consumers should check the temperatures occasionally with an appliance thermometer.

Consumers should look for the words "Keep Refrigerated" on juice labels so they know which products must be kept refrigerated. FDA is looking into whether industry's current juice labels provide clear refrigeration instructions.

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